

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

SEPTEMBER, 1981.

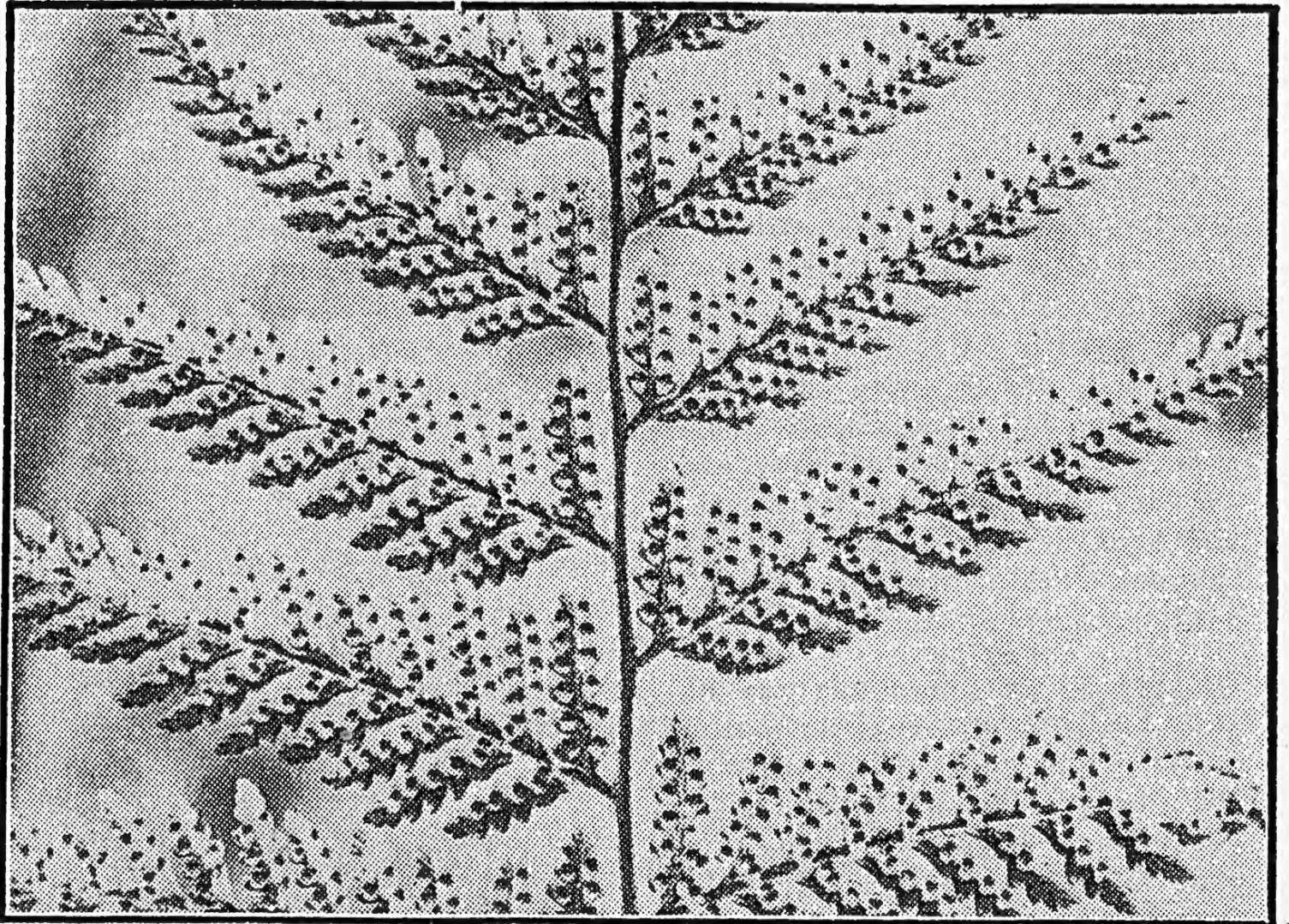
EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting : 4th September - "Natural History Collection" -
Mr. Peter Mansfield.

Meeting : 2nd October - "Aboriginal Sites in Victoria" - M. Truscott,
Educational Officer, Victoria Archaeological Survey.

Excursion : 6th September - Sunday - Full Day : Anglesea -
Miss M. White.

Excursion : 20th September - Sunday - Half Day : Enfield -
Mr. E. Bedggood.



DICKSONIA SPORES

Meetings, as specified, are held in the Administration Building of the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street South, Ballarat, commencing 8 pm.

EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, Cnr. STURT and ARMSTRONG STREETS, BALLARAT, AT 9.30 am FOR FULL DAY OUTINGS, OR AT 1.30 pm FOR HALF DAY.

President:	Dr. F. HARRAP	Phone 30 1651
Vice-pres:	Mrs. M. ROTHERAM	Phone 31 4054
Secretary:	Miss H. BURGESS	Phone 31 2210
Treasurer:	Mr. S. REYNOLDS	Phone 32 7721
Editor	Mr. J. NETHERWAY	Phone 32 7296

FERNS WERE THE TOPIC OF MR. TED ERREY AT OUR AUGUST MEETING

Approx 400 million years ago, tiny specks of green appeared. This was the ferns heralding the first sign of life. Today they are the most primitive survivors of prehistoric plants. Mysterious powers were once allotted to them as they do not have flowers. In Shakespearian times it was believed if you sprinkled spores in your boots you became invisible. It was only 100 years ago that botanists worked out the life cycle of the fern.

There are two types. Ground ferns and Epiphytes (which attach to other plants, not growing parasitically upon it, but merely using it for support). There is also great variety in type, from the 30-40 feet high slender tree fern down to the very tiny ones. The soft and the rough treeferns average 8 - 10 feet tall. The king fern is like the treeferns, but has a massive trunk maybe 3 - 4 feet across. The skirted treefern is believed to be a hybrid between the rough and the slender. Spores or sori, form along the edges of the pinnules of the soft treefern and along the centre of the pinnules of the rough. On most of the water ferns, spores are formed on the fertile fronds that grow from the centre. Mother spleenwort has young plants which grow from the pinnules. Young plants also develop from the mother shieldfern but from nearer the centre of its fronds. Bristly shieldfern is easy to identify as it has bristles on the stems and sharp points on the pinnules. The Austral ladyfern is very delicate and lacy and the Necklace fern grows on or between rocks. Bracken is the best example of creeping fern.

Habitat is very varied - even into Central Australia, Alpine areas - and salt spray areas. The Otways have at least 50 varieties. Mangrove ferns grow among the mangroves. These do not look much like ferns but the spore patterns on the back identify them as such. There are two varieties of these with one being more common.



In propagating ferns the time of choosing spores is most important. Too early or too late is no good. Examine carefully with a hand lens. When looking reasonable mature, take fronds and place in envelope. In a few days the spore case will open. Sterilize potting medium with hot water before sprinkling sori on the soil. Cover with clear plastic bag and label with contents, time sown etc. Leave standing without watering and keep out of the sun until green shows. They could need watering then.

Greg Binns extended our thanks.

Jean Spicer.

MOUNT COLE - Episode I

Saturday 8th Aug, 1981

Long ago when Noah entered the Ark he took his family and the animals 2 x 2.

On the last excursion there were 2 Arks (cars) and 5 x 2 embarking on a water-borne safari. Along the way to Beaufort and Ferntree Gully rain fell for 40 miles (not days) and the area under water was astonishing.

Arriving at the picnic grojnd, still raining a fire was coaxed into life. A damp walk was taken to the cascading waterfall and beyond where a number of different ferns were noted and discussed to add to one's knowledge of the genera. A few birds were noted, and several different Acacias in bloom or nearly so. Having gotten thoroughly wet a return was made to the hut to lavish more tender loving care on the fire and to partake of lunch.

Having "stoked the inner man" we were surprised to see a group of 15 Scouts arriving, intending to walk to Ditchburn Hut - so it appears Field Nats. are not the only crazy people. Steady rain continuing, it was decided to head for same place, by road though. Almost all the way it was necessary to negotiate quite a sea of water of varying depth. Almost every depression was running a bunker.

Arriving at Ditchburn's, still raining and rather cold, the hut was found to be undergoing repairs, so any further walking was postponed.

Ferns noted :- Rough tree fern, Smooth tree fern, Bracken,
Hard Water Fern, Fish-bone water fern, King fern.

Birds noted :- Yellow robin, Grey thrush, thornbills, and several honeyeaters.

Although rather damp, all noted it a most enjoyable water-borne experience thanks to Ted Errey and Helen.

MOUNT COLE - Episode II

Sunday, 9th Aug., 1981

Once again 2 Arks and 2 x 2 ventured forth but fortunately on drier ground this time, the weather being kinder. At Ditchburn's we found that the 15 Scouts from Mitcham had spent a comfortable night despite rain, snow, moving mice, and squalling cats. They intended heading back to the waterfall to their transports.

Exploring the creek near the hut two bodies got nearly knee deep in mud searching for ferns. Reaching firmer footing on a track higher up the hillside, an Armillaria test plot was explored. Due to the extensive presence of this dieback fungus, the Forestry Commission is trying to establish the cause and find some method of reducing its effects.

After lunch round the fire in the hut another area was explored, mainly along a walking track into the fern gully along the creek.

Mt. Cole was very heavily logged in the early days of settlement until finally the Forest Commission totally closed the area until about 40 years ago, thus allowing the forest to regenerate. While walking along the track we were amazed at the size of some of the stumps rotting away - up to 10 feet across. In the regenerated forest were many large trees - up to 60 feet before branching and 4 ft. or 5 ft. in diameter - probably about ready for logging.

Completing our exploration, noting many plants ready to flower, it was time to head for home.

A charming area well worth further exploration. Correa lawrenciana was flowering well and another fern thought to be Bat's wing fern was noted.

A few hungry leeches were about, and a mountain thrush was observed in the camping area for some time.

Peter Fry.

BITTERN LAGOON - WORKING BEE

TIME : Saturday, 12th September, 1981.

PLACE : Meet at Langi Kal Kal Office Clock at 1 p.m.

COULD YOU BRING WITH YOU :

Any trees or shrubs for planting (Preferably those that are endemic to the area, otherwise any hardy Australian trees or shrubs would be fine).

Tools e.g. spade, mattock, axe, secateurs, small sledge hammer, or small crow-bar,

Stakes and wire guards would also be handy.

It is proposed that the name "Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat" along with others will be printed on a new timber sign that is presently being made.



It is hoped that this sign will be erected, in early October, near the fence line of Bittern Lagoon.

Some suggested plants for the Working Bee :-

Acacia paradoxa (armata), A. Melanoxylon, A. Verticella, A. dealbata, Eucalyptus viminalis, E. radiata, E. camaldulensis, Leptospermum juniperinum, L. lanigerum, Melaleuca decussata, Callistemon paludosus.

Pat Murphy.

TO MERIMBULA IN AUGUST

On a recent trip to Merimbula, N.S.W. we were treated to the rare sight of a male lyrebird walking nonchalantly across the road, and into the bush in front of us. This was in the Lind National Park, between Orbost and Cann River. Other birds noted on the way were straw-necked, and white ibis, white-faced and white-necked herons, Indian mynas, brown hawks and sparrow hawks.

Having recently been given the "Reader's Digest Book of Australian Birds", I was far better equipped to identify the numerous birds that abounded in the gum trees surrounding our holiday flat.

The "tink-tink" of the bell miners was continuous, and the pied currawongs were forever chasing other birds. King parrots were particularly colourful, other parrots being crimson rosellas, eastern rosellas, superb parrot, and rainbow lorikeets. Birds noted along the coast were pelicans, silver gulls, crested tern, little black cormorant, and herons.

To complete the list there were red wattlebirds, yellow-faced, new holland, and regent honeyeaters, pallid cuckoo in numbers, restless flycatcher, spur winged plover, little wattlebird, satin bower birds, rufous tailed bronze cuckoo, olive backed oriole, brown pigeon, and the more common willy wagtails, kookaburras, little ravens, magpies and sparrows.

Birds seemed to be on the move all the time and without a doubt gave us a great deal of pleasure to watch.

Betty Gray.

TASMANIAN WILDERNESS CALENDARS

These will be available through the club at \$4.50 each. You can order your copy by placing your name on the list during this meeting.

MARYBOROUGH F.N.C. 30th ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Our members are cordially invited to attend this special occasion on Monday 7th September at the Maryborough High School, Palmerston St., starting at 7.30 p.m.

Miss Ethel Thompson will give a short talk on the Club's history, and this will be followed by slides illustrating club excursions over the years. Following the formal part of the evening there will be supper and a chance for people to talk informally.

V.F.N.C.A. MINI CAMPOUT AT ALEXANDRIA

The programme commences at 1.00 p.m. on Saturday, September 19th and concludes with a visit to Yauck Flora Reserve at 2.00 p.m. on Sunday September 20th. See our August newsletter, and letter from V.F.N.C.A. tabled at this meeting for details.

W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMPOUT AT DONALD

The programme commences at 1.00 p.m. on Saturday October 17th and concludes at 4.00 p.m. on Sunday October 18th. See our April newsletter and letter from W.V.F.N.C.A. tabled at this meeting for details.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LAND USE POLICY

The Standing Committee on Science and the Environment requests submissions on LAND USE POLICY, and the F.N.C.V. need data on :-

1. Alterations in habitat, particularly bush and swamp, and vegetation clearance.
2. The effect of the above on wildlife.
3. Factors responsible for the above.
4. Improvements to the legislation and administration which would overcome the above.

The information is required by September 16th, and to this end there will be a meeting at Greg Binns', 12 Pleasant St Sth., at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 14th September. Interested members are invited to attend if possible, or to submit notes.

WOODCHIPPING, URGENT.

The C.C.V., through the Director Mr. Geoff Wescott, implores you to write as a matter of urgency to :-

The Premier,
Parliament House,
Melbourne. 3002.

and The Minister for Conservation,
240 Victoria Parade,
East Melbourne. 3002.

- and express your views on WOODCHIPPING EXTENSIONS in East Gippsland and the Otways.

It is suggested that you emphasize what the Otways for example, mean to you personally e.g. holiday use, hiking, bird watching etc.

S.G.A.P. NATIVE PLANTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISPLAY

at St. Paul's Hall Saturday & Sunday Oct. 31st & Nov. 1st. The F.N.C.B. has been allotted space to the right of the door where we usually have our trading table. Other exhibitors include the Education Department, Agricultural Department, Forest Commission, Fisheries & Wildlife, Nurseries, and Ruth Anderson.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS AT OUR MEETING ON AUGUST 7th

Mrs. Murphy - One brolga at Bittern Lagoon.

Mr. Fry - A white-faced heron and nest in a pine tree at Russell Square.

Mr. Fink - Sheet iron placed around the trunk of a white gum to protect it, had been overcome by a koala climbing a nearby pine tree and jumping over to the gum.

Mr. Hammond - plovers nesting at Woodman's Hill.

Mr. Hawley - Plovers nesting in the grounds of Bishop's Palace.

Miss Burgess - a grey currawong aggressive towards a pied currawong - both appeared to be nesting.

Mr. Trezise - reporting on his safari trip to Darwin, mentioned sighting a 5" centipede.

Mr. Pickford - on the same safari, reported sighting 231 species of bird, including 27 honeyeaters, great-billed heron, yellow chats, Major Mitchell cockatoos, ducks, wood swallows and parrots in great profusion in 29 hours of birding.

Miss Chuck - in late July saw two areas of the tooth fungus, *Hydnum repandum* or *Dentinum Crocodilum*, at Invermay. Our fungi excursions have usually been early in July, and this could be the reason why they have only been seen once before on an excursion in 1979.

- It has been a good year for Cortinars.

NEW MEMBER - Miss Felicity was elected to junior membership. The president wished her a long and rewarding association with the club.
